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The Groundplane

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March 2011

Anatomy of QSOs

I hope everyone is keeping warm this winter. The contest season has started up in earnest, every weekend there is at least one popular contest and several regional contests.

The popular ones can be worked by making regional (US) as well as DX contacts. In having worked some of these contests and in making other types of contacts on HF, I recognize an emerging pattern.

So, I thought I'd get you interested in these, especially for those new to ham radio.

QSO is the Q-code for "an identifiable over-the-air contact between two radio stations", and QSL is the Q-code for "an acknowledgment" of such a contact.

There are 4 basic types of QSOs - Short Regional Contacts, Short DX Contacts, Casual Regional Contacts, and Contest Contacts. Regional

meaning all of US. They are similar but different, and recognizing them will help you have lots of fun on the air.

By convention, the calling station is said to be in Run mode and the responding station is said to be in Search&Pounce(S&P) mode. So I have prefixed the exchanges as RUN and S&P like a movie script.

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March Keynote

Dave Wolfe AA6XV has been involved with the CW art since age 14.

He's operated CW as a Radio Officer in the Merchant Marine and has dabbled in commercial CW.

At the SBARA March meeting, learn about operating CW - whether you are new to it or returning after being away from it for a while.

EMCOMMWEST 2011

Reno, Nevada - Once again the ARRL Specialty Convention EMCOMMWEST will be held in Reno, Nevada at the beautiful Grand Sierra Resort Hotel. This year promises to be yet another great gathering for fun, food, fellowship and some fantastic learning experiences.

This year's Keynote ARRL speaker will be Mike Corey, W5MPC, Emergency Response and Planning Manager from Newington, CT. Mike will share the latest in the world of emergency communications and what we can look forward to having just past the 75th Anniversary of ARES.

Continued on page 5...



Anatomy of QSOs cont.

Format of a Short Local Contacts

STEP 1 - The RUN station starts calling CQ:

CQ CQ CQ de K6VUG K6VUG K6VUG K <pause and listen>

CQ CQ CQ de K6VUG K6VUG K6VUG K <pause and listen>

CQ CQ CQ de K6VUG K6VUG K6VUG K <pause and listen>

STEP 2 - A S&P station who happens to be scanning around hears your call and decides to respond:

K6VUG DE KU6S KU6S K

STEP 3 - With the initial contact established, the RUN station provides an initial report:

KU6S de K6VUG GM, thanks for taking my call your report is 59, my name is Umesh and my QTH is Las Vegas, NV. How copy? KU6S de K6VUG K

STEP 4 - And the S&P station responds likewise:

K6VUG de KU6S GM, thanks for the report, your are also 59 and my name is SBARA and my QTH is Fremont, CA.
K6VUG de KU6S K

STEP 5 - Next the RUN has the option of sending their station information:

KU6S de K6VUG thanks for the great report SBARA,

my station is as follows -

Radio IC-7000, Power: 100 watts

Antenna Home Brew Vertical

Computer: Windows XP (optional)

Interface Rigblaster P&P (optional)

Operator: 50 years, first licensed 2003 (optional)

I am having a great time with the band conditions today,

you have a nice signal, what is your station like?

BTU SBARA KU6S de K6VUG K

STEP 6 - Then the S&P station can respond likewise:

K6VUG de KU6S FB Umesh, yes the propagation seems to be great,

I am able to work many local and DX stations as well.

My station is as follows -

Radio FT-2000, Power: 200 watts

Antenna Home Brew 5 element Yagi pointed East

Operator: 23 years, first licensed 2009 (optional)

Clubs: South Bay Amateur Radio Association (optional)

QSL Info: LOTW, eQSL and reply all paper QSLs

BTU Umesh, K6VUG de KU6S K

STEP 7 - The RUN station initiates end of contact:

KU6S de K6VUG thanks for the nice QSO

QSL Info: LOTW and eQSLs, sorry not setup for paper QSLs right now

Also looking forward to seeing you again

Until then wishing you (and your family) the best 73, and God bless !

Bye for now, SBARA, KU6S de K6VUG SK SK

STEP 8 - The S&P station also sends their regards and closes contact

K6VUG de KU6S thanks for the Nevada QSO, I needed it for my WAS award

It has been a pleasure, hope to see you another time and on other bands

Best 73 to you and your family as well

Bye, KU6S de K6VUG SK SK

You can use variations in the responses to make it "human" and have lots of fun doing it. For example, you can add weather information or something about your new radio or antenna.

This should give you a general idea of how a QSO is completed. A short DX contact will most likely skip steps 5 and 6 and combine steps 3 with 7 and steps 4 with 8, so that they can make more contacts in a short time. A Casual Regional Contact, on the other hand, will add more general discussions between step 6, and the "rag chew" can go on for as long either party is comfortable.

A contest QSO follows the same general format but is very much shorter, the intention is make as many contacts within the allocated time for the contest. The only information exchanged is the "Exchange" defined in every contest. I visit <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/weeklycont.php> as a convenient one-stop resource for upcoming contests.

RUN: CQ TEST de K6VUG K6VUG CQ

<short pause to listen>

S&P: de KU6S KU6S K

<no pause>

RUN: KU6S thanks UR 59 NEVADA NEVADA BK

<no pause>

S&P: K6VUG thanks UR 59 CALIFORNIA CALIFORNIA GL de KU6S

<no pause>

RUN: KU6S 73 de K6VUG QRZ?

<short pause to listen>

In this exchange, "TEST" will be replaced by the name of the contest, UR stands for "Your Report Is" and "59 Nevada" is the exchange defined per the rules of the contest. Digital exchanges, especially RTTY, are also known to abbreviate many words like Thanks as TNX, Thank You as TU and See You Later as CUL. Added to this, software programs like N1MM, HRD etc., help you avoid retyping repetitive phrases like "KU6S de K6VUG" or "59 CALIFORNIA CALIFORNIA" by pre-recording them into macro sequences. They also conveniently help you keep log of your contacts, so you don't have to write it all down on paper.

I hope this makes you want to try it, welcome home, hams belong on-the-air !

73!

Umesh Ghodke

The Tri City VE Group

Party Hats and Balloons

Happy Birthday Tri City VE Group!
We're one-year-old March 13, 2011.

For one so young, we've accomplished a great deal:

Candidates served 119. Exams administered 147 including several "tri-fectas" with a candidate walking in without a license and walking out having earned all Elements.

49% came to us for a Technician license, 30% for General Element 3 and the rest for Extra Element 4,

with overall very good exam results. Of all Technician tests we administered, 95.7% passed. That's something to brag about! We've attracted candidates from Nevada, Washington, San Diego, Mendocino, Redding, San Rafael and Sacramento.

One of our unique factors is offering exams on weeknights. This was suggested by our VE mentor extraordinaire, Morris Jones of the Silicon Valley VE Group. 47% of our candidates tested on a weeknight. Comments have been: "Evenings don't conflict with weekend family responsibilities." And "I work nearby so it's easy to get my upgrade before I go home."

Our Push-To-Talk station and the complimentary Congratulations Kits have been a big hit as well as the free SBARA memberships to those earning their first license through the Tri City VE Group. A whopping ten people joined SBARA in 2010 because they tested with us and three more joined after becoming VEs with us.

Congratulations to all who've made this a landmark year for SBARA.

Rita Derbas KI6SSQ and Bernhard Hailer AE6YN

East Bay Hamfest

The East bay Section leadership would like to have an annual one half or full day event in the spring or summer.

This event is not intended to replace or compete with Pacificon (the Pacific Division Convention) but would serve as an opportunity for our section members to gather, share "war stories" and meet with the section leadership.

We are looking for an individual, committee, group, or club to help with the organization and planning.

For ideas on what other Sections have done, see:

www.radiofest.org/

vomarc.org

www.k6is.org/

If you are interested in helping with this endeavor, please contact SM Jim Latham (af6aq@arrl.org) or any of the EB Section Leadership.

www.eastbaysectionarrl.org/contact

Fremont ARES Test—MURS

We had 5 Rovers and 2 people at Station 2 the whole time and Captain Ashley gave us all a great tour of the facilities as well before we started up the radio testing.

Before we started with the distance test, we verified that the J-Pole antennas and the Diamond DX-50s that are installed on various stations work acceptably with the

MURS radios. The one J-Pole we had with us had a defect so we decided to use the already-installed amateur DX-50 on the station for the actual distance testing.

Power output of the MURS radios was measured at about 0.8 watts on "high" power - we might need to check this, as its supposed to be 2 watts.

At about 10:15 we started the radio testing and were done by 11:30 at which point we left the station and headed out for lunch.

We were able to make contact across much of the service area of Station 2 this way.

Fremont ARES Test—MURS cont.

Overall this is leaving me feeling a little better about the use of MURS for coordinating CERT teams in the neighborhood around a fire station, but it makes it pretty clear that we need to have people (either CERT communicators or hams in our existing group) at stations to run the voice part of this net. We can share the antenna between a MURS radio and a UHF radio (for packet or voice). This makes it even more important to get the rest of the antenna's installed and cable found etc. if CERT is going to depend on these as well.

Good mini-exercise on Saturday all!

Thanks

-joe pistritto

N3CKF - Fremont EC

Newark ARES/CERT

Next Meeting

Our monthly meeting is the usual 2nd Thursday of the month, 10-Mar-2011, 7-8PM, at Newark Fire Station #28 at Thornton Ave and Ash St. We will be discussing Emergency Message Passing, and practicing "Windshield Surveys".

We will be using these skills in April, when we have Tri-City Weekly Net Control duties again. Light refreshments will be served.

CERT/ARES Workshop

There is a unique CERT/ARES Search and Rescue (SAR) training opportunity for us. San Joaquin County ARES is sponsoring a combined CERT/ARES Urban Search Workshop on Saturday March 19th.

The Alameda County SAR Team is doing the instruction. Space in the workshop was originally pretty limited, but they've just opened up more spots in the workshop, so there is probably still room if you register soon.

The workshop is being held over in Stockton, 0800-1600 on March 19th. Let me know if you register and get confirmed, and I'll try to help coordinate car pools to the training.

It should be a very useful workshop!

Visit

www.NewarkCERT.org for more information.



EMCOMMWEST 2011 cont.

Also, at our Saturday night banquet, we are honored to have as our special guest, former ARRL president, Jim Haynie, W5JBP who served 3 terms as League president, and made some awesome contributions to Amateur Radio, including his creation, "The Big Project" to attract young people into the hobby, and his love of and support for emergency communications is second to none.

We will also again offer a Sunday morning breakfast, vendor hall, Saturday morning

swap meet and the Friday night BBQ, hosted by the SATERN team at the Reno Salvation Army.

Once again you could win some great raffle prizes as we give away our grand prizes of an ICOM 7000, and a KENWOOD TS-2000!

New this year will be a "Youth Lounge", where kids can congregate, meet and have fun while mom and dad attend the conference. And ALL forums and meeting rooms will be on the same floor, with easy access to everything!

Our venue, The Grand Sierra Resort has something for everyone, including

2 pools, driving range, indoor golf, movie theaters, indoor mall for shopping and some great restaurants for dining.

Registration is open now, and all information can be found at our website, www.emcommwest.org. For more information and questions, please email to info@emcommwest.org. We hope to see you there for another great time this year! 73!

EM-COM Info

Tri-City ARES
Web site: www.fremontares.org
Contact: Joe Pistrutto, N3CKF

CERT Comm—Fremont
Web site: www.fremontcert.org
Contact: Jim Thomas, KI6TCE

CERT Comm—Newark
Contact: Mike Berke KI6EGL

Am-Tech Day

March 19, 2011
8:00am — 6:00pm

10 Hours of Fun Amateur Radio
Activities in Menlo Park one Saturday a month!

Keynote to be announced.
For more info, visit:

www.fars.k6ya.org/amtechday/

New Net!

N6IJ launches their Net !!

Thursday (this evening) at 2000 hrs
On the W6ABD Repeater

Call in 146.640 PL 162.2

The Net will be hosted by the Loma
Pioneer Repeater Club.

Members and guest will be welcome
to check in to the Net !!

Swap Meets

LARK Swap Meet

Livermore Amateur Radio Klub (LARK) holds its monthly swap meet (in Livermore) the first Sunday of each month from March through November.

The seller's entrance will open at 6:15 AM, and the buyers gates open at 7 AM through 11:30 AM.

Seller's spaces are available for \$15 to \$45 and buyers enjoy free admission.

For more information, visit

<http://www.livermoreark.org/swap/swap.html>

Electronics Flea Market

The first Electronics Flea Market of 2011 at De Anza College is scheduled for this Saturday, March 12th from 5:00 AM 'til noon.

Your host and beneficiary for this month's market is the Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association.

More information and directions may be found at the Electronics Flea Market web site at

<http://www.electronicfleamarket.com/>

Repeaters and Nets

Repeaters

WA6PWW: 147.015+ 600Khz, PL 103.5
WA6PWW: 223.900- 500Khz, PL 107.2
WA6PWW: 442.600+ 5Mhz, PL 107.2
K6AIR: 441.525+ 5Mhz, PL 123.0

Nets

9 am Talk Net: M-F, 9am-11am, (N6NFI) 145.230- PL 100.0
25-25 Net: Wednesdays 8:00 p.m. 144.230MHz USB
ARES Net: Tuesday @ 7:30pm, 147.015 + PL 103.5
FARS Net: Thursday @ 8:00pm, (N6NFI) 145.230- PL 100.0
Slow Speed (CW) Net: Tue/Sun 7:30 pm, 144.175 (+/- KHz as needed)
Youth Net: Saturdays, 2pm, (N6NFI) 145.230- PL 100.0
LPRC Net: Thursdays @8:00 p.m., (N6IJ) 146.640 PL 162.2

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SBARA

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The Ground Plane — KU6S

<http://www.sbara.org>

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